

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-28. (canceled)

29. (new) An apparatus for treating cytological or histological specimens comprising:
a plurality of processing stations;
an object holder for carrying at least one specimen;
a transport device for delivering the object holder into and out of the processing stations, wherein the transport device includes:
a robot arm having a free end movable in three-dimensions;
a gripper mounted at the free end of the robot arm for releasably grasping the object holder;
wherein the gripper is actuatable to grasp the object holder by lowering the free end of the robot arm to cause the gripper to engage the object holder while the object holder resides in one of the processing stations; and
wherein the gripper is actuatable to release the object holder by lowering the free end of the robot arm beyond a position at which the object holder resides in and is supported by one of the processing stations.
30. (new) The apparatus according to claim 29, wherein the object holder includes a pair of hooks on opposite sides of the object holder, and the gripper includes:
a pair of slots for respectively receiving the pair of hooks of the object holder, each of the pair of slots having a downwardly-facing open end;
an actuation member movable to and from a closure position wherein the actuation member closes the open end of each of the pair of slots; and
a rotatable switching cross engaging the actuation member, wherein a rotational position of the switching cross determines whether the actuation member is in the closure position or away from the closure position, and wherein the switching cross is rotated by engagement thereof with the object holder.
31. (new) The apparatus according to claim 30, wherein the switching cross is rotated by engagement thereof with one of the pair of hooks of the object holder.
32. (new) The apparatus according to claim 29, wherein the gripper is pivotally mounted at the free end of the robot arm.